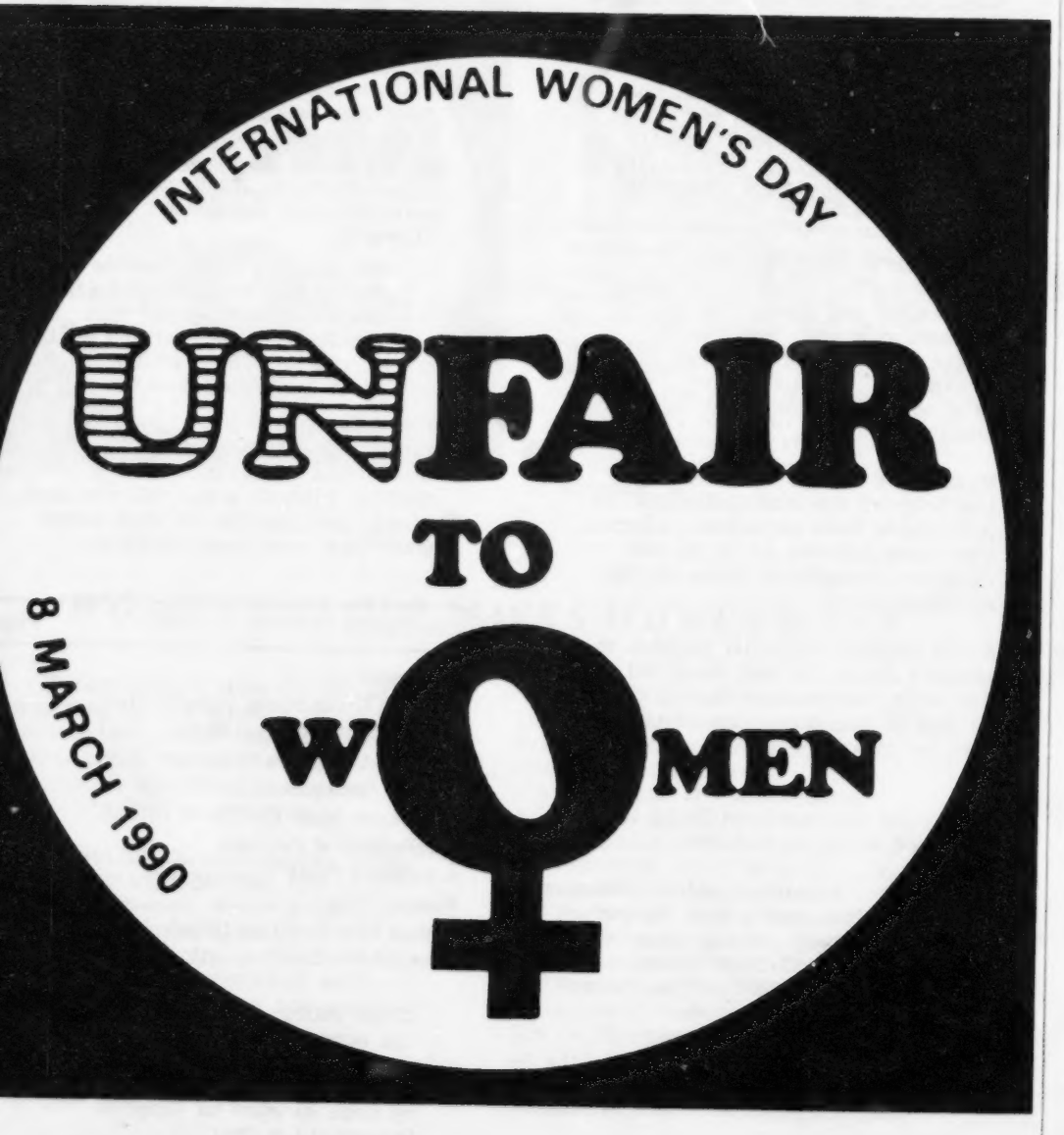
# EQUAL TIME

Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations

MARCH 1990



EQUAL TIME is published by the Group on Equal Rights for Women, which was established in 1971 to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women in the United Nations System and to ensure that equal opportunities exist for women as provided for in Article 8 of the UN Charter, which states:

> "The United Nations shall place no restriction on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs."

The Women's Group monitors implementation of official policy statements and directives concerning women, provides a support system for UN women and encourages consciousness-raising in the Group and among the staff in general.

EQUAL TIME wishes to acknowledge the help of the Administration in publishing this magazine. However, the views express in it do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration.

Staff members who wish to join the Women's Group, or get involved in its work, can contact its officers or any of the convenors of the working groups.

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EQUAL TIME MARCH 1990

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CARTOONS: Re-printed from the Affirmative Action Handbook, Review of New South Wales Government Administration, 1980, with the kind permission of Ambassador Peter Wilenski.

The Women's Group thanks Maxim Zhukov and the staff of the Graphic Presentation Unit, and Tom Prendergast and the staff of the DPI Photo Unit, for their kind co-operation.

The Women's Group particularly wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of JOE AKAKPO-MARTIN, without whose efforts the timely publication of this issue would not have been possible.

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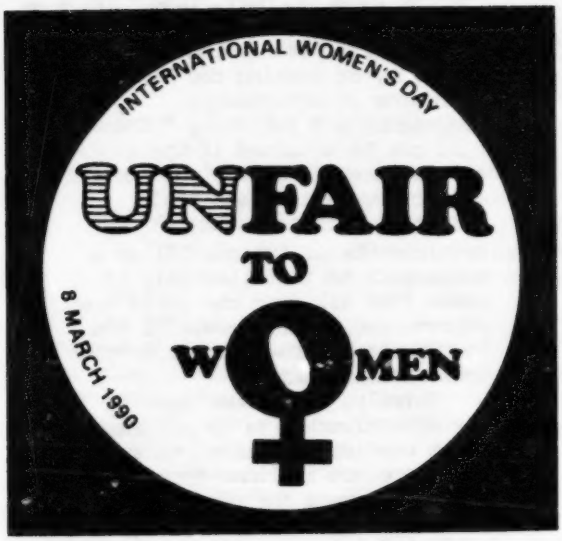
COVER PHOTO: The button chosen by the Women's Group for 1990 proclaims "UNfair to Women." The button was executed for the Group by Olga Ainagas of Graphic Presentation Unit.




# *PERSPECTIVE*

"UNfair to Women," the theme of the button for International Women's Day 1990 decided upon by the Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations, reflects both women's recognition of change that has taken place at the United Nations, as well as the concern that the Secretary-General's expressed commitment to full equality will not soon be translated into action. Women in the United Nations continue to face discrimination in promotions, assignments and working conditions despite the efforts of many. Much remains to be done.

The design of the button was executed for the Group by Olga Ainagas. ■

## *WOMEN'S GROUP MARKS WOMEN'S DAY*

International Women's Day will be marked by the Women's Group on 8 March 1990, with the traditional midday panel led by distinguished leaders in the struggle for the equality of women and men.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar will deliver the opening address. Peter Wilenski, Permanent Representative of Australia, Bela Abzug (United States), who is a national and international advocate for women, and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson (Liberia), a political activist and international banker, will lead the discussion of "Strategies for Empowerment in the 1990s to Achieve Gender Equality." Kristen Timothy-Iankester, President of the Women's Group, will moderate the discussion.

The panel will be held in the Economic and Social Council Chamber from 12:30 to 2:30. It is open to all staff members.

At 5 p.m. in the Express Bar, the Women's Group will host an open house for all staff.

Women's Day has been observed by UN Staff Members since 1973. Its celebration was first proposed in 1910 by Clara Zetkin, a representative of the Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen. ■

## AMB. WILENSKI SPEAKS ON EQUAL RIGHTS

Addressing the Third Commitee on 31 October 1989, on the Item "the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat" on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Ambassador Peter Wilenski said:

It is important that we should from time to time remind ourselves why this issue is not merely one of a cluster of administrative items but a matter which goes to the heart of UN principles and purposes. Repeated studies have shown that in every large organisation almost throughout the world, women are discriminated against in subtle and not so subtle ways. Regrettably this has also been so in our own Organisation. Experience has also shown that women will attain their rightful place only if the barriers to their advancement are removed and programes to remove the effects of past discrimnation are introduced. Why is this so important?

First, because it is a matter of basic human rights and social justice. The Charter of the UN in its very first article asserts the equal rights of men and women and this Organisation should be in the vanguard of making those equal rights a reality.

Second, it is the only way that this Organisation can be run efficiently. Article 101 of the Charter says, in part, that "The paramount consideration in the employment of staff...shall be the necessity of seeking the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity." These will not be attained if the claims of competent women for advancement are not recognised and their talents frustrated. The requirements of Article 101 as a whole will be fulfilled only if women from all over the world are represented at all levels of the Secretariat in the proportion that their ability demands.

Thirdly, the issues goes to the effectiveness of UN programs. Again studies have shown that if women are not included among the decision makers the needs of women tend to be systematically neglected or ignored in the Administration of public programs. It is especially important in UN programs that womens's needs be recognised.

The advancment of the status of women in the Secretariat, therefore, goes to the heart of the programs, the processes and the values of the UN. ■

## WOMEN'S GROUP SETS GOALS FOR 1989-90

The Group on Equal Rights for Women in the United Nations at a meeting on 11 October set action objectives for itself for targets for the number of professional women in geographical posts to be achieved chiefly through promotion, and parity of men and women at senior levels. It also called for careful study of the vacancy management system in comparison with the system of appointment and promotion permitted by the Staff Rules, identification of those offices which do and those which do not promote women, and implementation of the ICSC-approved benchmarks of the Secretarial occupation.

*(Continued on page 15)*

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# VACANCY MANAGEMENT:

## WOMEN'S GROUP STATES ITS VIEWS

After extensive discussion held first in a working group, and later at a plenary session chaired by Group President **Kristen Timothy-Lankester,** the Women's Group on 8 November 1989 pronounced its views on issues arising from the Vacancy Management System.

The text of the statement of the Group follows:

The subject of vacancy management is complicated as it has come to represent the nexus of most areas of personnel policy: recruitment, assignment, promotion and/or career development. Without attempting to design a more rational system of personnel managment, it is possible to delineate major issues and approaches which could meet minimum standards of equity, openness, workability and offer safeguards against abuse.

The Vacancy Management System was conceived in 1986 (a) as a means to cope with the financial crisis which stemmed from protracted uncertainty about the commitment of Member States to meet their financial obligations, and (b) as a direct response to recommendation 15 of the Group of 18 calling for a 15 percent reduction of the core posts of the UN Secretariat.

The VMS was originally introduced as an emergency measure to fill "through redeployment, essential posts... vacant as a result of the recruitment freeze or projected to become vacant..." (ST/AI/338). The experiment of the last two-plus years has however been distorted by the effective substitution of the VMS for the promotion system already provided for under the Staff Ruels. Moreover, the System does not incorporate any right to appeal, which is contrary to the Staff Rules and Regulations.

The Group's preliminary views on the implications of the VMS are presented here under the following headings: (i)redeployment, (ii)promotion and (iii)recruitment.

(i) Redeployment

The Vacancy Management System both explicitly and implicitly emphasizes redeployment. The designers of the VMS saw the financial crisis as providing a unique opportunity to introduce a new system of staff redeployment.

The Group aggrees that to facilitate the movement of staff as a voluntary option as one facet of a career development system is of unquestionable merit and utility both to individuals and to the Organization. An effective mobility system which builds upon past experience could therefore be an enormous asset to the Organization. It should ideally include the following elements.:

1. Circulation of vacancy notices system-wide;

(Continued on page 6)

(VMS, continued from page 5)

2. Provision for lateral movement and not promotion;
3. Applications reviewed by a joint staff-management body;
4. A system of accountability by heads of Departments and Offices, including, for example, an annual report on redeployemennt/promotion of staff by OHRM broken down by department and office and by level and gender.

(ii) Promotion

Under Vacancy Management, the Staff Rules have been suspended and replaced de facto by a set of procedures which are being constantly revised. Yet the Staff Rules can only be changed by the General Assembly.

The Staff Rules contain several elements of a promotion system which are considered essential to the integrity of a joint staff-management body, establishment of registers by the Secretary-General and the right of staff to make recourse. Other procedures have also been gradually accepted, i.e., creation of intradepartmental Promotion Panels/Groups and the right of staff to address in writing the Promotion Bodies to present their case for pormotion.

In addition to the safeguards of that system, which staff have rightly come to expect, it also allows for the application of uniform promotion policies throughout the Secretariat, permitting meaningful action in pursuit of such goals as the enhancement of the status of women staff --goals which should not be left to departmental discretion. In this connexion, it is important to underline that the Administrative Instruction on Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment dated 22 Decemrer 1986 explicitly called for "full attention" to be given to "the Secretary-General's policy to enhance the career opportunities for women and to identify those with the potential for advancement" and cited in this connexion ST/SGB/220 of 15 October 1986. It did not however spell out any meaningful procedure for ensuring that this is in fact done.

The Group believes that all promotions should be subject to objective processes. The cumulative seniority guidelines for women contained in ST/AI/338 Add.5 remain valid.

Such a promotion system can function in parallel with a redeployment mechaniam. Moreover, redeployment and promotion will work better if they are separate from each other and from recruitment.

(iii) Recruitment

The established principle reflected in Staff Regulation 4.4. should be maintained that serving staff should be given first consideration to fill any post. Where external recruitment is resorted to, preference should be given to women.

The entry level examination system and the increased representation of women by no means contradict one another. If the internal and external competitive exams are to be reconciled, the rationale for limiting the internal process to an arbitrary percentage of posts is no longer defensible.

Entry level of all staff should be monitored to ensure that women are not discriminated against.

The Organization should consider holding national exams only in cases where qualified women constitute a significant percentage (40 % to 50 % ) of the candidates. ■

# UN WOMEN MADE UP OVER 45% OF UNTAG

In the nine-month UN Namibia operation just ending, UN women--working as regional directors, soldiers, secretaries, doctors, nurses, poll watchers, fingerprint experts, and others--made up over 45 per cent of the UN Transition Assistance Group.

Interestingly enough, the UN women played this vital role in the UN's major decolonization operation at a time when the Administration has indicated it is finding difficulty fulfilling the goal set by the General Assembly of 30 per cent women in professional posts subject to geographical distribution by 1990.

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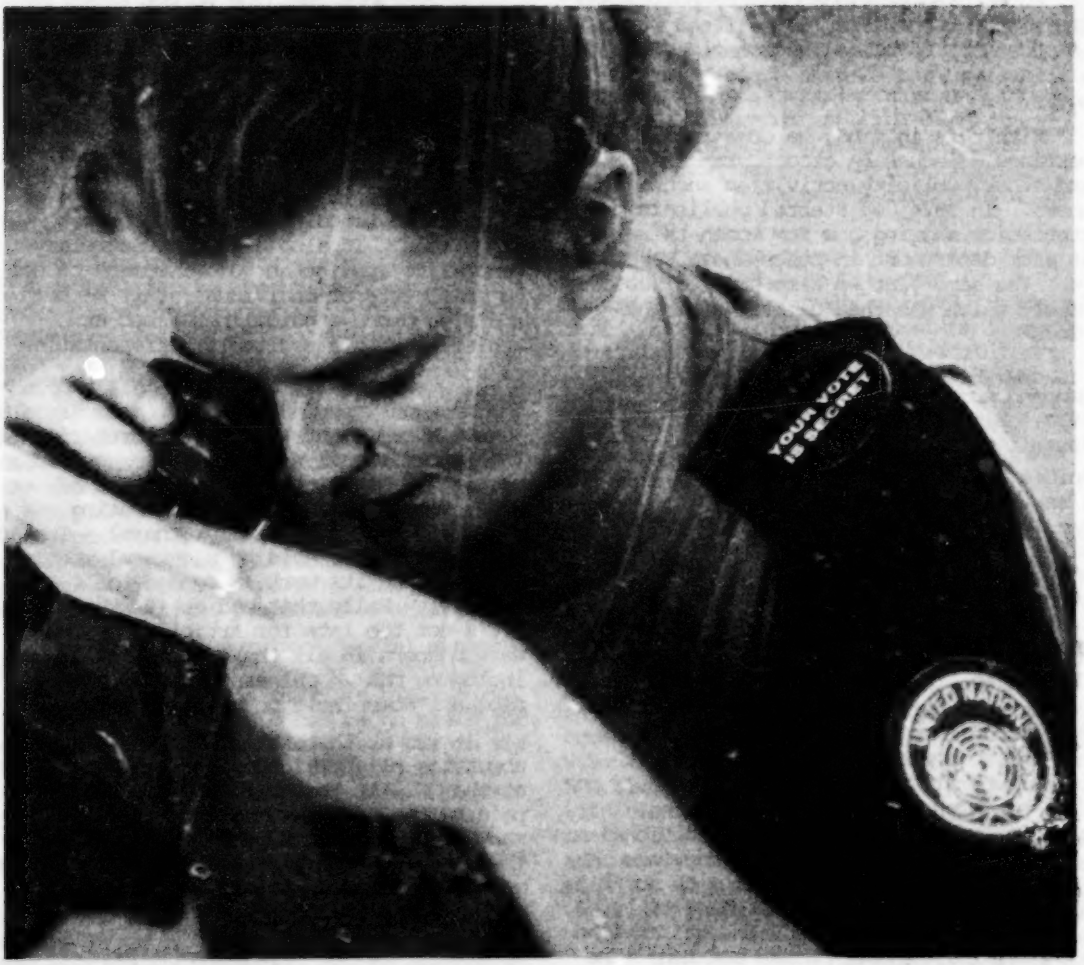
UN. SEC.


YOUR VOTE
IS SECRET
UNITED NATIONS

# THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS OF THE STAFF OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*Recollections of Patricia K. Tsien*

**EQUAL TIME here continues its excerpts from the recollections of Ms. Tsien, first Chairperson of the Women's Group, which it began publishing in November 1989.**

Having eliminated legal discrimination, the role of the Ad Hoc Group on Equal Rights for Women entered a new stage. The women now had equal rights but they certainly did not have equal treatment when it came to recruitment, assignments and promotions. To raise the status of women in the Secretariat and to help them gain access to policy and decision-making posts, we realised it would be necessary to raise the consciousness of all involved and to gain support for our goals.

With this in mind, we organized meetings, discussion groups, rap sessions and other publicity activities such as film shows. In 1974, we started publishing statistics showing how few women there were in each department in posts above P3 and P4. The same year we also started our own paper, which was then called "News and Views".

Suddenly the issue of equality between men and women became a popular topic. In 1972, UNITAR organized a Colloquium in Austria entitled: Situation of Women in the United Nations. In addition to calling for a revision of the Staff Rules and Regulations, the Colloquium recommended steps to improve the recruitment, placement and assignment of women. It also put forward suggestions for improving the conditions of work and for improving the status of women in the UN system.

In 1974, addressing the Joint Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General made his first commitment on the participation of men and women in the Secretariat under conditions of equality.

Then came 1975, which the General Assembly had proclaimed as International Women's Year. March 7, that year, was celebrated at UN Headquarters with an international Encounter. A panel of eighteen distinguished persons was invited to discuss the topic "Women and men: The Next Twenty-five Years". The panelists included Mme. Jeanne Martin Cisse, the Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations; Betty Friedan; Germaine Greer; Oriani Fallaci, and Alvin Tofler. The Encounter was attended by more than a thousand people including delegates, non-governmental organizations, observers, staff members, the Press and the public. The most important theme that came out of the discussion was that of the emergence of women at a time of an historic transformation of the whole social system, with the women playing a part both as the agents of change and those whose lives were being rapidly changed. Much would depend upon women themselves.

On the same day, the Ad Hoc Group on Equal Rights for Women held a meeting after which we presented the Secretary-General with a petition signed by 2,750 women and men at Headquarters. This petition requested the Secretary-General to end all institutional discrimination against women in the Secretariat and the Specialized Agencies, and to undertake a programme of affirmative remedial action to correct injustices. It also asked the Secretary-General to appoint an "Ombudswoman" to act on complaints of individual staff members and also propose guidelines aimed at achieving a more equitable representation of women in policy-making professional posts.

On Human Rights Day, the Secretariat of the International Women's Year organized a meeting to highlight the importance of equal rights for women. This meeting was addressed by the Secretary-General. The Ad Hoc Group, after holding a general meeting to report on its work, attended the Solidarity Rally that had as its theme "It's not too late for Article 8". There were banners in all the official languages, including one in Chinese with the Chinese slogan: "Women hold up half the sky".

It was at this rally that we learned about the plight of the language teachers at the UN. At that time they were being paid by the hour, as teachers were paid at many of the language schools in the city that were run for profit. UN teachers also had no sick leave, no paid holidays, no health insurance and no maternity leave.

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Nineteen of the twenty-two teachers were women.

With the support of the Ad Hoc Group which helped to publicise their treatment, their contracts were improved, and they eventually became staff members.

A further UNITAR Colloquium was held in 1975 and a two-volume report was issued with studies on almost all aspects of the problems women faced in the UN. What was needed now was - ACTION.

As International Women's Year moved to an end, there was a strong feeling among some women that the Ad Hoc Group had been moving too slowly. Another group was formed that called itself United Nations Employees for Equal Opportunity (UNEEQ). It was this group that first proposed a discrimination survey questionnaire. The Ad Hoc Group, which by then had been officially recognized, decided to sponsor such a survey and enlisted a number of colleagues to help in the preparation.

By this time, fortunately, attitudes in the Secretariat had begun to change. The Under-Secretary-General for Management and Administration authorized the survey and a financial contribution for the printing of the questionnaire and a desk-to-desk distribution. Several hardworking women undertook the analaysis of the replies and two very helpful male colleagues prepared the statistical data. All told, we received 875 replies, of which 637 were from women. The report on the questionnaire was also given desk-to-desk distribution. From the answers we received, we were able to draw up a more detailed programme of action.

In 1976, the Secretary-General accepted our invitation to address our meeting on International Women's Day. In his remarks he stressed that "there can be no place for discrimination on grounds of sex within the United Nations Secretariat. Article 8 of the Charter forbids it." He also informed the meting that the Office of Personnel Services had been "directed" to make a maximum effort to ensure the achievement of the goal set down in the General Assembly Resolution 3416 (XXX) (i.e., during the bienna 1976-1977 and 1978-1979 to fill 5 per cent of the mid-point of the desirable range of posts subject to geographical distribution of each region with the appointment of qualified women, with priority being given to candidates from under-represented countries.) While welcoming this official commitment, we further requested the Secretary-General to issue a clear policy statement emphasizing that discrimination based on sex is contrary to the provisions of the Charter, and to ensure that every effort would be made to eliminate all administrative practices that discriminated against women in areas of employment. We again called for the establishment of an Ombudsperson, the establishment of an inventory of human resources of non-professional staff with a view to identifying and promoting those qualified to assume responsibilities at a higher level. We asked the Administration to prepare a manual of terms and expressions that might be offensive to women, and to ensure an equitable representation of men and women on all joint advisory bodies. We also repeated our request for the establishment of a day care centre.

Following the directives of the Secretary-General, the Directror of Personnel sent a memorandum to all Heads of Departments and Offices requesting them to report on action taken on the recruitment and assignment of women, and on changes in the proportion of male and female staff by category and level, and giving reasons for any changes that had been made. This was the beginning of a monitoring of the situation of women in the UN Secretariat.

In 1977, the Joint Inspection Unit also made a survey of the situation of women in the various organizations in the UN system (JIU/REP/77/7). What the JIU found was quite shocking. The percentage of women professional staff in "supervisory positions" in posts P1 and above in 1976, based upon information provided by each organization, was as follows: UN 10.5; FAO 9.3; ILO 8.7; ITU 30.4 but none above P3; WHO 21.6 but none above P5 and WMO 23.1, with none above P4. In its report, the JIU stated that it believed that there were adequately qualified women candidates to meet the requirements of the international civil services and that the principle of

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geographical distribution should not be used as an excuse for not recruiting women. It also set out sixteen recommendations for action. The two most important were that each organization should designate a person or a panel responsible for the concerns and interests of women in that organization, and that each organization should establish targets for women in the preofessional category. It further recommended that for a limited period, when two candidates (male and female were equally qualified, preference should be given to the woman, especially if she was from a developing country or from an under-represented country.

Such recommendations from the highly esteemed and independent Joint Inspection Unit represented progress, but of course it remained for each individual organization to implement those recommendations. At the UN, the Secretary-General issued the long-awaited policy statement on the Equality of Men and Women in the Secretariat (ST/SGB/154). Guidelines for the promotion of equal treatment were issued as ST/IC:79:17 in 1979. The circular reminded all staff members that they have an obligation to respect, in their attitudes, behaviour and language, the equality of their colleagues, irrespective of sex. ■

# A PURLOINED PAPER

A legal researcher tells us that as she recently sight-read her way through cases filed in the Law Library, she was overcome by the similarity of most cases. Our scholarly friend began flipping pages faster and faster. Eventually as she turned pages faster than the speed of light, she found herself reading landmark cases which came to judgement some time in the future.

Our friend must have been more shocked at her discovery then she realized, because she found later that she had slipped one of the cases into her briefcase. In for a penny, in for a pound, she was muttering the afternoon she dropped one of the cases off with EQUAL TIME:

Uncommon cases No. 1

International Court of Justice
Advisory Opinion - 1999

Ms. X vs. The Secretary-General

As the UN Administrative Tribunal had failed to act on a complaint based on an allegation of discrimination based on sex, claiming that it lacked jurisdiction, the matter was referred by the General Assembly to the Int'l Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. The Court found, by a vote of 7 to 4, that the Tribunal, in refusing to exercise jurisdiction, had so erred and it referred the case back to the Tribunal in the light of this finding.

The Facts:

The Court noted that the facts were as follows: Ms. X had entered the service of the UN at the age of 22 in 1960. At that time she was given a temporary appointment at the G2 level which was subsequently converted into a permanent appointment in 1970. By seniority and promotions she

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reached the G5 level in 1979 when she successfully passed the G to P examination and was given a post at the P2 level. She was eventually promoted to the P5 level in 1990 serving successively in OPS, OFS, the Narcotics Div., and in the Dept of Affairs (formerly the Dept of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization).

The Court noted that the staff member at the time of entry into UN service held a degree from the University of Oxford (B.Lit. (Hons)); that she subsequently obtained a diploma in strategic studies from MIT and a diploma from West Point where she had attended the first summer course open to women in Defense against Psychological Warfare, obtaining the equivalent of the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

When applying for a job at the UN, she was informed that despite her outstanding qualifications she could not be recruited at a professional grade because of her nationality, which was over-represented.

Subsequently, this argument was repeated on several occasions when she sought a promotion after having reached the professional level by examination. The Court notes that whatever justification might have been present or lacking in that argumentation, it had become irrelevant when she applied for the position now at issue, namely, that of a D3 with responsibility for UN Forces in Outer Space, in the Office of the U-S-G for Peacekeeping, since the staff member had by then acquired Welsh nationality on the establishment of Wales as a Sovereign State and its admission to the UN as the 187th member state on St. David's Day 1990. In fact, the appellant is the only staff member of that nationality in the professional category.

The Court therefore finds merit in the argument that the true reason for the lack of progress in her advancement to higher levels was not nationality but sex, it having been shown that male staff members of the UN, irrespective of nationality, have been promoted more rapidly than the appellant during the period in question. The Court recognizes that in certain circumstances a mixture of the wrong sex and nationality can produce, in the UN, the opposite of what explosive combinations produce in nature: slow-down and stagnation rather than propulsion and expansion.

The Place of Sex in Outer Space

The Court further finds that whatever doubts might linger about the reasons for the snail's pace of appellant's career progress before 1995, there can be no doubt that in the specific complaint before the UNAT, namely, the failure to appoint her to a D3 vacancy, the underlying reason was discrimination based on sex. This is demonstrated by the allegations which have remained unrefuted that those in authority - all of them males - whom appellant consulted, almost instinctively reacted by pointing to the rather obvious fact that she was a woman, prefacing this demonstration of the acuity of their powers of observation with an explanatory "but".

In response to her insistence on a more substantive reaction to her request, she was met with a display of subterfuges of infinite variety, ranging from a statement such as "UN Forces in Outer Space might get caught up in star war encounters of the third kind," to the bromides that there was no room for a woman "in the sun" to "a woman's place was in the home." Also, it was argued that keeping women out of outer space

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was intended for their own protection. For, it was said, that as all pictures beamed from earth to possible addressees there intended to convince them of the friendly disposition of earthlings, had been exclusively of the male of the species, lack of familiarity with women might endanger the latter as suspects belonging to a sub-human species.

The Court finds that however well-meaning or ingenious some of these pretexts were they could not hide the naked truth that they were nothing but stubborn survivors of an attitude outlawed as long ago as 1945 in the UN Charter and believed eradicated with the appointment in the 80's of a coordinator for women - an office since transformed into that of an "Under-Secretary for Sexual Equality and Population Issues."

The Verdict

In the light of these findings, the Court holds that the appellant has been the victim of a recrudescent manifestation of the outlawed practice of sex discrimination and it remits the case to the UNAT with a request to draw all appropriate conclusions therefrom.

The Court having found further that the absence of a restatement of Art. 100 of the Charter in the Staff Regulations was no bar to its serving as a source of jurisdiction for the UNAT, recommends to the latter to take account of the fact that the appellant has all the necessary qualifications to fill the vacancy for which she has applied - by training and by the display of perseverance, patience and fortitude in the alien and sometimes hostile surroundings of her UN service - gives every promise of being able to perform yeoperson service in similar conditions in outer space for the good of all personkind. Hence, the UNAT might consider specific performance as an appropriate remedy in this case.

As to compensation for the loss suffered by appellant through the delay in her appointment, the Tribunal might recommend that she be retained in her post for five years beyond the present age of compulsory separation (70), taking into account the effect of the theory of relativity on the measurement of time in her future duty station which may cause her to grow younger rather than older as she would on earth, appropriate allowance being made for home leave and consultations at Headquarters.

Judgment rendered this 29th day of February, 2004.

Signed: Mme. Emma Bovary, President
Sra. Beatrice Dante
Ms. Olivia Windel Holmes VIII
Dr. M'Bowregard
Mme. O
Lady Fanny Windermere
Uly Tantamount

Dissenting: A. Schopenhauer, Jr
Ms. Ping Tu-Ran-Doe
L. Tolstoyevsky
Dr. Johnson

Registrar H. Ibsendotter

All the dissenting judges filed separate opinions which for reasons of space are not reproduced. ■

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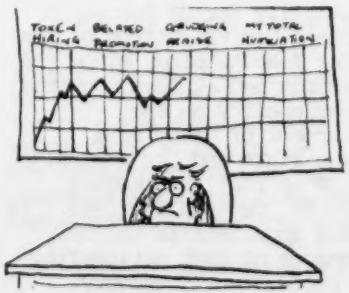

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The six action objectives the Group is pressing for are the following:

-- New long-range targets for the number of professional women in geographical posts, i.e., 35 per cent by 1992; 40 per cent by 1995 and 45 per cent by 1997, to be achieved, primarily through career development and internal promotion and, at entry levels, through recruitment.

--Pressure for parity of men and women at the P-5 and D-1 levels and at least 30 per cent women at D-2, ASG and USG levesl by 1995.

--Speedy implementation of the 40-plus outstanding provisions of the Action Programme of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat as endorsed by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

--Careful study of the vacancy management system as it is being applied, and as it compares to the system of appointment and promotion provided for by the UN Staff Rule 104.14; greater accountability on the part of heads of offices and departments for the implementation of the targets and policies for women's equality and advancement in the Secretariat, and while the vacancy management system is in place, introduction of recourse procedures for all staff members who have reason to believe they have been treated unfairly.

--Identification of and publicity about those Departments and Offices which have been active in the promotion and recruitment of women, as well as those which are delinquent, and pressure to redress the imbalances.

--Immediate implementation of the benchmarks for the Secretarial occupation approved by the ICSC; implemention of G-6 and G-7 levels for Secretaries, and discontinuation of the term "Related Category" as demeaning to staff whose work is central to the functioning of the Organization. ■

THE ONCE AND FUTURE MAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Maurice F. Strong, the first Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and Secretary-General of the 1972 Conference, has been appointed Secretary-General of the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development.

Supporters of equal employment opportunities for women and men join environmentalists in welcoming the appointment of Mr. Strong; known as a man of action, more than lip-service on both fronts is expected.

Mr. Strong told our reporter that he "expects to staff up the Secretariat of the Conference the way the world is: equal numbers of men and women." As it is a new secretariat, he forsees a real opportunity to involve some of the many qualified women in the field - scientists, negotiators, managers and others.

The First Preparatory Meeting opens on 5 March, at Headquarters, and decisions on staffing must await approval of a budget. Mr. Strong's photograph is not printed above to enable interested staff to recognize and way-lay him in the elevator; OHRM is handling personnel processing. ■

## WOMEN MAN New York Offices

*by Lucy Webster*

Women play a key role in a large number of New York offices that represent various United Nations bodies at Headquarters. Three of the ten offices covered by a 1988 MAS review are headed by women. In addition, women play the main substantive roles and undertake major negotiating work in several other offices.

EQUAL TIME this month met with some of these women and discussed their ideas regarding their contribution to the Organization.

Aliya Celik stressed the value of substantive knowledge of low-cost building techniques in promoting the Habitat Global Shelters Strategy for the Year 2000—both to encourage action by Member States, and to have an exchange of information with the professional groups and other private sector bodies that contact the UN on this subject.

The experience of the New York Office of tthe UN Office in Vienna also demonstrates the role of substantive knowledge. Kristen Timothy who heads that Office finds that she must be able to deal with the full range of issues handled by the UNOV, from drugs, to the status of women, to aging and crime prevention. Her fole also involves negotiation and problem-solving to represent the interests of the UNOV and its programmes.

Elisaavet Stamatopoulou-Robbins who is in charge of the NY Office of the Centre for Human Rights is also filling a complex set of roles, representing the Centre in UN legislative bodies at Headquarters, and representing the UN as regards human rights to a broad general public. She is frequently called to the gates of the Secretariat to meet with human rights groups.

The scope and quantity of the work of the NY Office of the Centre for Human Rights demonstrates another fact concerning the role of women in liaison roles. In a number of these offices, one or two of the General Service Staff fill a vital role that would in many organizations be filled by professional staff. Examples of this include the work over more than 20 years of Aline Cousineau-Brown and Elise Smith who have provided continuity and held responsibility for a broad range of human rights tasks. Other such staff are Martine Coursil and Laura Liechi of Habitat.

Kate Newell, who is the Chief of the New York Office of the World Food Council, finds that representing the Council to the General Assembly and ECOSOC at Headquarters demands a sustained effort at building up trust with people involved on both sides.

The Regional Commissions New York Office demonstrates that women are important, especially as diplomats who can gain the confidence of the Regional Commissions which they represent and the officals and delegations to whom they represent the Commmissions. Benny Widyono says that the women in his office are central to its performance.

Harriet Schmidt, now a Senior Officer has been in the Regional Commissions NY office for more than five years. She shares the full range of its work with Mr. Widyono, who is the Director. She finds that knowledge, juddgement and being diplomatic are essential to the tasks of acting for the Regional Commissions at Headquarters, alerting them to developments that would concern them, and speaking for them. Michele Fedoroff fills a key professional role in the Regional Commissions Office, following the work of the Second Committee and working with delegations.

The three General Service staff in the Office also play a major part. The Documents and Information Officer, Maria Baquero, is a walking encyclopedia for the Commission's work over 10 years, and Anne Mellett serves as the New York secretary to all five USGs who head the five Regional Commisssions. ■

## NEWS BRIEFS

OHRM INVITATION TO GOVERNMENTS: On 16 November 1989, OHRM invited representatives of UN member states to a meeting where OHRM discussed its efforts to increase the representation of women, particularly women from under-represented country, in professional posts. ■

WANTED TO RECRUIT: WOMEN PROFESSIONALS FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED COUNTRIES. On 23 January, in a memo to all Department Heads, Administration Chiefs and Executive Officers, Kofi Annan, ASG for Human Resources Management, declared his concern for the "slow progress" made by the Secretariat towards "meeting the goals of 30-per cent women in Professional and higher level posts subject to geographical distribution by 31 December 1990." Mr. Annan urged all concerned to launch a "concerted effort to meet this goal." ■

THREE WOMEN JOIN ICSC: Turkia Daddah (Mauritania), Francesca Yetunde Emanuel (Nigeria) and Claudia Cooley (United States),. Ms. Daddah has served as Chairman of the General Assembly's Third Committee and as a member of the Governing Council of UNFPA. Ms. Emanuel has served as Permanent Secretary of the Political Department of her country's Cabinet Office and as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development, Youth and Sports. Ms. Cooley had 18 years experience in her government's central personnel agency. Her most recent post was as Deputy Associate Director for Compensation. The 15-member International CiviL Service Commission is the body established by the UN in 1974 to help regulate its personnel and allowance policy. ■